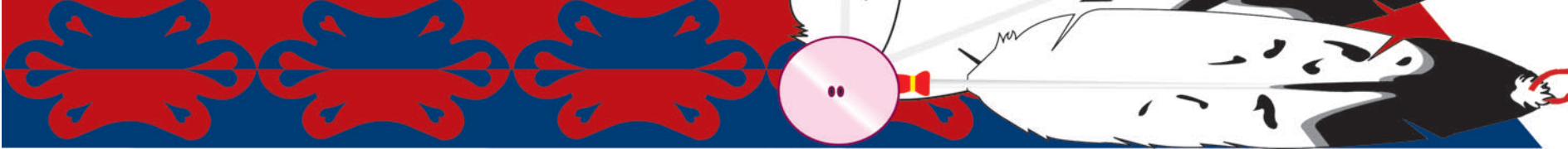


Menominee Nation News



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‘PAWAHĀN-KĒSOQ’ (GATHERING MOON)

Becky Alegria

Menominee Historic Preservation

Right on the mark of tradition, in the second week of September was the full moon or “Pawahan-Kesoq” (Gathering Moon). During this week the Menominee Tribal School and the Menominee High School students were on the Little West Branch of the Wolf River harvesting Wild Rice. “Pawahan-Kesoq”, the gathering moon, also called the harvest moon, primarily refers to the gathering of the Wild Rice.

In the past the Wild Rice Harvest was a significant tradition. Nearly everyone on the reservation participated because it was one of the most essential food staples for the Menominee People. Shortly after the turn of the century the Tribe was denied the harvesting of one of our hereditary foods. The Menominees could no longer camp on Shawano Lake, our main harvest ground for wild rice because of the settlers who were moving into the area.

Since 1993, the Menominee Historic Preservation Department has carried out the Wild Rice Harvest. In the early years the harvest was carried out in cooperation with Leslie Shawanokasic’s Culture Class at the High School and the Menominee Historic Preservation Department. Now, the Wild Rice Harvest is a revived tradition and has greatly expanded. Kathy Waupoose from the Tribal School takes her students ricing each year, as does John Teller Sr. from the Menominee Indian High School. On occasion the Neopit Intermediate School has participated and Keshena Primary School comes to observe the processing steps of the rice harvest. There is a growing interest of participation not only locally but now includes organizations from Chicago and Milwaukee. This year the Milwaukee Indian Community School will be joining the Menominee Historic Preservation



Submitted Photos/Historic Preservation

Above-Melanie White (center) a language trainee from the Historic Preservation Department accompanied students, Hannah Tourtillott (left) and Delsy Kakwitch (right), from Menominee Tribal School deep in the Wild Rice Beds above Rainbow Falls.

Inset-Pictured are Menominee Indian High School students from Mr. John Teller’s Culture Class.



Department in harvesting wild rice on the Wolf River.

Before entering the river in canoes, Dave Grignon the Historic Preservation Director, tells the students, “Manomaeh, is what the wild rice is called in our language. For centuries our people harvested Wild Rice in the vast area that we occupied that ranged over 9 million acres. It was this time of the year, “Pawahan-Kesoq,” Harvesting Month that we did this. It is said that we would always have these gifts, and it is true

up to today, we have maple sugar trees and we have Wild Rice Beds. Today we are going to harvest the rice. This is the first part in the steps we have to go through. Next will be drying the rice, cleaning the rice, then parching, dancing on the rice and lastly, winnowing the wild rice, there is a process we follow. The rice is sacred to our people and this rice bed is also. We are trying to preserve what we have left of our culture, language and traditions, especially with the school kids. The river is also

sacred to us, when you are in the canoes be respectful to the water and be good. It is an opportunity that has come to you to harvest the wild rice.” The Menominee Language trainees from Mr. Grignon’s program were obliged to say the customary prayers and provide a brief Menominee Language lesson regarding all aspects of the Wild Rice Harvest to all who participated.

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